

Department of Defense (DoD)
Civilian Personnel Management Service (CPMS)
Field Advisory Services - *FAS*
Classification Appeal Decision

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| DoD Decision: | Aircraft Examiner (General), WD-2601-07 |
| Initial classification: | Aircraft Examiner (Electronics Mechanic), WD-2604-07 |
| Organization: | Army Depot Director of Aircraft Process Support Airframe Pre-Shop Analysis Division |
| Date: | September 5, 1997 |

BACKGROUND

The appellants jobs are currently classified in the Production Facilitating pay plan as Aircraft Examiner (Electronics Mechanic) WD-2604-07. The appeal requests that the jobs be classified at the WD-08 grade level.

Documents in the appeal package indicate that there was classification certificate issued on this job by the OPM Regional Office on March 17, 1977. However, we were advised by the Office that their records only went back to 1990 and that they had no record of a decision on the subject job. We also requested a records search by OPM Washington D.C., the Department of the Army, and the Depot, with the same result. Since there is no record of the OPM certificate we proceeded to adjudicate the appeal.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION:

The appellants' letter of September 23, 1996

The agency's letter of July 28, 1997

Telephone interview with one of the appellants on August 21 and 22, 1997.

Telephone interview with the appellants immediate supervisor on August 21, 1997

GENERAL ISSUES:

The appellants believe that the activity erred in determining that the Electronics Mechanic, WG-2604-11, work was the base level of work they facilitate. The appellant's believe that their grade should have been determined based on the work performed by Electronic Integrated Systems Mechanics, WG-2610-12. The appellants do not contest their pay plan, title or series.

REFERENCES:

Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Introduction to the Position Classification Standards

OPM Introduction to the Electronic Equipment Installation and Maintenance Family, WG-2600

OPM Operating Manual, Federal Wage System, dated September 1996

OPM Federal Wage System Key Level Definitions for Production Facilitating Jobs, TS-67, April 1993

PAY SYSTEM DETERMINATION:

The OPM Introduction to the Position Classification Standards provides, in Section IV: Determining Coverage by the General Schedule of Federal Wage System, under subsection A. General Criteria, that:

1. 5 U.S.C. 5102(c)(7) exempts from coverage under the General Schedule those "employees in recognized trades or crafts, or other skilled mechanical crafts, or in unskilled, semi-skilled, semi-skilled manual-labor occupations, and other employees including foremen and supervisors in positions having trade, craft, or laboring experience and knowledge as the paramount requirement."
2. The "paramount requirement" of a position refers to essential, prerequisite knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to perform the primary duty or responsibility for which the position has been established. Whether particular types of positions are trades, crafts, or manual labor occupations within the meaning of title 5 depends primarily on the facts of duties, responsibilities, and qualifications requirements; i.e., the most important, or chief, requirement for the performance of a primary duty or responsibility for which the position exists. If a position clearly requires trades, crafts, or laboring experience and knowledge as a requirement for the performance of its primary duty, and this requirement is paramount, the position is under the Federal Wage System regardless of its organizational location or the nature of the activity in which it exists.

under Subsection B. Borderline Positions:

For the vast majority of positions, the determination as to coverage by the General Schedule or prevailing rate wage system is not difficult to make. Sometimes, however, the proper pay category cannot be determined easily by direct application of the law or by OPM classification standards and guidance in the [OPM Operating Manual] or specific standards. In such borderline positions, it is necessary to evaluate such factors as (a) the nature of work products or services of the organization, (b) working relationships with other positions in the organization, (c) normal lines of career progression, (d) equitable pay relationships with other positions in the immediate organization, and (e) management's intent, or purpose, in creating the position. This examination should not place emphasis on the organizational location or the physical environment of the position. If the weight of these factors points toward trade, craft, or manual-labor knowledge and experience as being of paramount importance in performing the primary duty of the position, it is proper to classify it under the prevailing rate system. If not, the position is subject to the General Schedule. In borderline situations, the position record should clearly state the facts and conclusions on which the pay category determination is based.

and, under paragraph 7 of Subsection B, Examiners, screeners, checkers, and other similar positions (other than inspectors):

Positions which involve determining repairs, modifications, replacements, or reconstruction needed for compliance with specifications, blueprints, or technical orders are under the Federal Wage System if they require trades, crafts, or manual labor knowledge and experience as the paramount requirement.

The Introduction to the Electronic Equipment Installation and Maintenance Family,

WG-2600, provides specific criteria to be used in determining whether jobs in the electronics field are General Schedule or Trades and Labor jobs. The standard states: "The differences between the electronics mechanics and technicians are not so much in the types of skills, knowledges and abilities possessed but in the degree to which they are possessed and the manner in which they are used." For example, the repair of electronic systems and equipment of the type generally performed in overhaul shops is characteristically a trade function. Such work includes detecting and diagnosing malfunctions, tearing down equipment, repairing or replacing parts or components, and aligning and calibrating and testing the modified equipment. Positions in which the performance of such repair work functions is the paramount requirement are trades positions. By contrast, General Schedule technicians perform similar work in connection with the paramount requirement for performance of engineering functions such as developing and designing test equipment, analyzing present repair practices and developing procedural instructions for use by others on methods and steps of equipment repair, or conducting engineering evaluations of the adequacy of such things as the test and calibration equipment used in making repairs.

The primary responsibility of the subject job is to ensure that appropriate determinations are made as to the depth and scope of repair, overhaul or modification work required to return aircraft electronics components and systems to acceptable operating condition. The appellant analyzes aircraft logbooks, performs operational tests, conducts visual inspections of components for damage, and troubleshoots electronics components and system problems. Based on this analysis he prepares work packages for the repair shop personnel to follow. These packages specify necessary repairs to be performed, system configuration requirements and specifications, test requirements, and technical guidance on the accomplishment of the work. The appellant also checks the work of shop personnel when unusual discrepancies are reported and makes final decisions on depth and scope of repair. The appellant provides specific guidance and advice to mechanics on disassembly and repair procedures to be followed. This involves typical trades type work including disassembly, repair, modification and reinstallation of applicable components and parts. To perform or review this type of work requires specific knowledge of electronics trade practices and procedures and the ability to perform the journey level work of the trade. While other work, which could be classified under the General Schedule is performed (i.e., developing cost estimates, determining materials needed, and estimating manhours required to perform work), such work is not the primary function or focus of the job. Therefore, it is determined that the subject job is covered by the Federal Wage System.

PAY PLAN DETERMINATION:

The OPM Operating Manual - Federal Wage System, Subchapter S11-3, Special Pay Plan for Production Facilitating Positions states that: production facilitating jobs that require prior experience at the journey level of a recognized skilled trade or craft, or at the full skill level of other wage occupations, are paid under the special production facilitating wage schedule for the local wage area. As discussed above under Pay System Determination, this job requires journey level knowledge and experience in the electronics trade, therefore, this criterion is met.

The Operating Manual further states that no wage positions, other than those whose duties and responsibilities meet key characteristics described in the key level job definitions in scope and level of skill, are included in the production facilitating pay plan. The OPM Key Level Definitions (KLD) for Production Facilitating Jobs includes a definition for Aircraft Examiner under KLD #003. This KLD describes duties and responsibilities which match those of the subject job. Included in the KLD are responsibilities for examining the condition of aircraft components to determine the depth of overhaul required; prescribing extent of disassembly, and specifying any departures to be made from the standard overhaul process all of which match the primary functions of the subject job. Also in the KLD, under Typical Work Performed, are specific work procedures most of which were identified as being part of the work of the subject job as documented either in the job description or in audits with the appellant and/or his immediate supervisor. These procedures include: reviewing aircraft

log books to determine number of hours flown, location and conditions of operation, crash damage sustained, incorporation of changes and other factors significant to determining required depth of overhaul; and, conducting functional tests and visual examinations to determine the condition of aircraft components. They determine which components meet quality standards and decide which can be left on the aircraft and which must be removed to give access to other components. They also determine which components do not meet standards and can be repaired on the aircraft, which must be removed and given standard overhaul processing, and which, although they must be removed, can be repaired by less than standard overhaul KLD #003 is a match with the appellant's work. Therefore, it is determined that the subject job is appropriately included in the Production Facilitating (WD) pay plan.

TITLE:

The OPM Operating Manual states that the title of a job covered by the production facilitating pay plan is the basic title shown on the key level definition with which the job is matched followed parenthetically by a specific or general trade designator. Since the duties and responsibilities of the subject job are a match with KLD #003, the basic title of Aircraft Examiner is assigned.

The Operating Manual states that when a production facilitating job involves or requires experience in more than one trade, and none of these trades is paramount or most important for qualifications, recruitment, or other personnel purposes, the word "General" is used as the parenthetical designator. In the subject case the work involves both Electronics Mechanic, WG-2604 and Electronics Integrated Systems Mechanic, WG-2610 work. Experience in both of these trades is required and neither can be said to be a paramount requirement or most important to the accomplishment of the work. Therefore, the parenthetical designation (General) is assigned.

DETERMINATION OF PAY LEVEL:

The Key Level Definition for Aircraft Examiner provides a table to determine pay level. For the purpose of applying this table, the term base grade is defined as the WG grade that best represents the non-supervisory work involved in the work processes being planned, controlled or facilitated. When two or more different levels of work are involved, the base grade to be used is the grade which is most representative of the work planned for, controlled, or facilitated, and which produces the most equitable pay relationships. In the subject organization there are approximately 105 jobs classified in the the Electronic Equipment Installation and Maintenance Family, WG-2600. Of these there are approximately 93 classified at the journey level. Of these journey-level jobs, approximately 78 are Electronics Mechanics, WG-2604-11, and 15 are Electronics Integrated Systems Mechanics, WG-2610-12. The Electronics Mechanic work constitutes over 80% of the journey-level work performed and is, therefore, determined to be most representative of the work examined by the subject jobs. The base grade of WG-11 is assigned.

Application of the pay level table for Aircraft Examiner, results in the assignment of the WD-07 pay level.

DECISION:

The job is properly classified as Aircraft Examiner (General) WD-2601-07